



October '90

Southeast News

PUBLISHED BY THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

VISION "91" A HISTORY MAKING VENTURE

For the first time in its history, the S.E. Conference is launching a financial campaign to expand its programs and services to churches. June 9, 1990 was the time and Talladega was the place, where the delegates at the Annual Meeting voted unanimously to launch a financial campaign.

With the direction of its mission to increase the presence of the United Church of Christ and to support the work of its churches, the Board of Directors and the Annual Meeting voted to set a goal of \$150,000 with a challenge goal of \$200,000 to be raised in 3 years.

The purpose of VISIONS "91" is to provide significant new resources:

To assist the renewal of existing churches and to develop new churches; to provide leadership training for clergy and lay people; to secure a visible and well-equipped adequate Conference headquarters; to provide visibility and to promote our UCC denomination in the Southeast; and to begin an endowment fund to help assure financial stability for the future.

Our common heritage is rich and diverse. With so many strands that make up our history, it is sometimes difficult to see our common ground. Yet there is a thread in the fabric of our heritage that brings us together. As followers of Jesus Christ we seek to know and do the will of God. We are excited about the freedom, stimulation and nurture which our denomination offers to Christ's followers. We are enthusiastically committed to enabling the Conference to more fully support our local churches in their ministries.

The Southeast Conference is at the threshold of a new era in its corporate life. The future which Christ gives us freely is for growth in mission. We have a significant witness to make which requires a strong and vital life together. We must provide the resources to make that mission possible.

During the Spring of 1990, leaders and representatives of churches throughout the Conference were asked to define what they feel are the strengths, needs and opportunities within the Conference. These issues were gathered together and presented to the Conference Board and to the Annual Meeting.

From these discussions came the decision to launch a special campaign to raise sufficient funds to address the most urgent challenges that are before the Southeast Conference. These challenges have become the major goals in the Financial

Campaign which has been named "VISIONS 91." These objectives can be identified with single words: 1st — Churches; 2nd — Leadership; 3rd — Identity and Visibility; 4th — Facilities; and 5th — Endowment.

Within the next few months, you will be asked to make a commitment to this 3-year campaign. Prior to making your personal pledge, we ask that you give careful and prayerful thought as to what your commitment will be. The categories of giving are:

| | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| VISIONARY | \$10,000 and over |
| PILLAR | 5,000 - 9,999 |
| CORNERSTONE | 2,500 - 4,999 |
| PARTNER | 1,000 - 2,499 |
| NURTURER | 500 - 999 |
| SUPPORTER | 100 - 499 |
| HELPER | to 99 |

The goal is for every member to make a gift/pledge, with all payments completed on or before January 10, 1993.

Faith plays a vital role in both determining and fulfilling commitments. We have the faith of knowing that God is in control of our lives; faith that God has abundant resources; and faith that God will answer our every need.

In addition to your personal pledge and gift, you will be asked to join the Campaign Committee and the Steering Committee in weekly prayer. No commitment to God can be genuine unless it is born in prayer. In prayer we discern God's will for our lives, affirm God's love for us, and receive courage to do what God wants us to do. Faith, sacrifice and prayer are essential to a genuine giving commitment.

We invite you to share in this vision, as we join together in this journey of faith. We look forward to sharing more of our vision in the coming months.

OUR VISION IS A CHALLENGE — WE MEET IT
OUR VISION IS A GIFT — WE ACCEPT IT
OUR VISION IS AN ADVENTURE — WE DARE IT

Ren Manning has agreed to chair the Campaign Committee, and Erna Bryant serves as chair of the Steering Committee.

Ren Manning; Chair, Campaign Committee
Erna Bryant, Chair, Steering Committee

CONFERENCE CORNER

Conference Minister Message

Did you ever wonder about the responses of people to Jesus' invitation, "Come, follow me." How amazing that they "up and left their present place." The Office for Church Life and Leadership has just published a resource, "Come, Follow Me," indicating that we all have responded to Jesus' invitation to follow him in some manner or other.

But the invitation also points to a significant aspect of our theological and societal heritage, namely, voluntarism. We volunteer to be on committees, participate in projects, give ourselves to causes, and share with others in ways that build ties of a caring community. Our society could not function without volunteers — and surely our churches would not be the Church if we did not voluntarily give of ourselves and our means. The importance of this principle when we describe our United Church of Christ congregations as "churches of choice."

I was overwhelmingly pleased at the Annual Meeting when, after the Hearing on the Special Conference Financial Campaign, three persons immediately afterward came to give a check or indicated to me their intent to give (a designated amount of money) for the campaign. Then later another person offered professional services and other means to make sure we have a long-range planned giving program. *Amazing voluntary responses!* — because of their faith, their commitment, and to make sure that the upbuilding of Christ's Church goes forward. How humbling and powerful when we respond voluntarily and give of ourselves! I can only thank the many of you who do so regularly, faithfully. Let us look forward to the Campaign to be able to respond voluntarily with overwhelming gratitude, as we underwrite the platform of our mission and needed program emphasis as we share the GOOD NEWS of God in Jesus Christ.

Faithfully, RK

N-E-W-S and N-O-T-E-S CALENDAR

November

- 1 Church Development and Commission
- 2-3 Finance Committee
- 7-8 Annual Meeting Planning
- 12 Association Conference Minister Search Committee
- 16 Personnel Committee
- 17 Board of Directors

January

- 15 Last Day — Books close for 1990
- 18 National Planning Teams and Conference Staff
- 22-25 Conference Ministers Meeting

February

- 1-2 Board of Directors

CLUSTER MEETINGS

Purpose: to empower local church leaders in their leadership roles by a grounding in UCC Identity (and polity) a training for officers and other leaders and an information time with Conf. staff; also familiarity with pertinent resources.

Times:

Saturday 10-2 (30 min. lunch)

Sunday 3-7 (30 min. supper)

Evening 6-9 (bring lunch - have coffee provided)

Dates:

| Fri. | Sat. | Sun. | Mon. |
|--------|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| | 2/9 Savannah | 2/10 Jonesboro | 2/11 Thomasville |
| 2/22 | 2/23 Lanett | 2/24 Roanoke | |
| A. Ala | 3/2 Belvidere | 3/3 Knoxville | 3/4 B'ham. 1st |

Leadership: Erwin Milton, OCLL staff

Conf staff - to introduce and host

3/8-9 Annual Meeting Planning Committee

OCWM SUPPORT

(As of August 1990)

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Alabama-Tennessee | 50,816.22 |
| Eastern Alabama | 13,018.00 |
| So. Ala / NW Florida | 1,856.00 |
| Georgia - S. Carolina | 33,567.06 |
| Individual Gifts | 3,331.40 |

Nominees Sought for UCC Boards and Agencies

Southeast Conference has received a request from the Nominating Committee of the United Church of Christ for name to be placed in nomination on its slate for General Synod 18. These are to be nominations for the General Synod moderators, Executive Council, and Board of Directors, as well as names for Secretary of the United Church of Christ. Below are the categories and total numbers of persons required from across the UCC for General Synod 18 elections:

Moderator of General Synod: 1 clergyperson

Assistant Moderators of General Synod: 1 layman; 1 laywoman

Executive Council of the General Synod: 11 to be elected (4 clergy, 4 laywomen, 3 laymen)

United Church Board for Homeland Ministries: 75 to be elected (25 clergy, 25 laymen, 25 laywomen)

United Church Board for World Ministries: 75 to be elected (25 clergy, 25 laywomen, 25 laymen)

Office for Church Life and Leadership: 8 to be elected (0 clergy, 3 laymen, 5 laywomen, of whom 1 must be under 30)

Office for Church in Society: 4 to be elected (2 clergy, 2 laywomen, 0 laymen, of whom 1 must be under 30)

Office of Communication: 4 to be elected (1 clergy, 1 layman, 2 laywomen, of whom 1 must be under 30)

Stewardship Council: 6 to be elected (3 clergy, 2 laywomen, 1 layman)

Health and Welfare Coordinating Council: 2 laywomen

Coordinating Center for Women: 5 to be elected (2 clergy, 1 layman, 2 laywomen of whom 1 must be under 30)

Nominating forms, bylaw descriptions of the work, and qualifications of officers and board members are available at the Conference office. These nominations must be in to the national office in Cleveland by December 1, 1990. This is an excellent chance for many Conference folks to serve in some exciting ways.

UCC WOMEN CLERGY

The Florida Conference will host a Retreat for Clergy Women, February 3-6, 1991, at the Lake Byrd Conference Center in Avon Park, Florida (an hour from Orlando). All are invited. Further information forthcoming from the Florida Conference, 222 E. Welbourne Avenue, Winter Park, FL 32789. Phone: (407) 645-5458.

A Modern Parable

Long ago, when the world was very new, there was a certain lobster who determined that the Creator had made a mistake, so he set up an appointment to discuss the matter.

"With all due respect," said the lobster, "I wish to complain about the way you designed my shell. You see, I just get used to the one outer casing, when I've got to shed it for another. Very inconvenient and rather a waste of time."

To which the Creator replied, "I see, but do you realize that it is the giving up of one shell that allows you to grow in to another?"

"But I like myself just the way I am," the lobster said.

"Your mind is made up?" the Creator asked.

"Indeed!" the lobster stated firmly.

"Very well," smiled the Creator. "From now on, your shell will not change . . . and you may go about your business just as you are right now."

"That's very kind of you," said the lobster and left.

At first the lobster was very content wearing the same old shell. But as time passed he found that his once light and comfortable shell was becoming quite heavy and tight. After a while, in fact, the shell became so cumbersome that the lobster couldn't feel anything at all outside himself. As a result, he was constantly bumping into others.

Finally, it got to the point where he could hardly even breathe. So with great effort, he went back to see the Creator.

"With all due respect," the lobster sighed, "Contrary to what you promised, my shell has not remained the same. It keeps shrinking!"

"Not at all," smiled the Creator. "Your shell may have gotten a little thicker with age, but it has remained the same size. What's happened is that you have changed — inside, beneath your shell." The Creator continued: "You see, everything changes . . . continuously. No one remains the same. That's the way I've designed things. And the wisest choice is to shed your old shell as you grow."

"I see," said the lobster, "But all growth carries with it both the possibility of discomfort and the potential for great joy, as you discover new parts of yourself. You can't have one without the other. When you let go of your shell and choose to grow, you build new strength within yourself. And in that strength you'll find new capacity to love yourself . . . to love those around you . . . and to love life itself. That is my plan for each of you."

copied from Synod of the Northeast UPCUSA

• Peace

• Bob Peebles

CLERGY REPORTS

Deaths:

Ernest Shelton

Herschel Armour

Fred Myers

Robert Peters, Sr.

Fred Morris

Our sympathies to Beth Knight, whose father passed in May, and Roger Knight whose brother passed on June 16, 1990.

THE EVANGELISM INSTITUTES OF THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE - UCC

"It's the best thing I've ever been to in my 82 years!" Lala Allen of Pleasant Grove UCC in Alabama was testifying to the enthusiasm and new life experienced in the Southeast Conference during the first ever Evangelism Institute.

The Institutes are a three-year program aimed at aiding church growth. Rick Parson, an energetic young business executive in Murfreesboro, Tennessee is hoping the Institutes help to develop a new church start in his home community. "I was skeptical when I registered," says Rick, "but I quickly was caught up in the spirit and the new vision."

Kathryn Childers of Pleasant Grove UCC reinforced what fellow member Lala Allen affirmed, "God was surely with us in that place."

Why this sudden surge of interest in evangelism? There are several reasons. First, the national emphasis on denominational growth was named priority at the last General Synod of the United Church of Christ. But more, local churches throughout the South have long recognized the need for a strong presence of the UCC in the sunbelt. Finally and most importantly, evangelism is our calling. Evangelism is proclaiming Good News! Evangelism is demonstrating Good News! Evangelism is reaching out to others who need the Good News! Evangelism is the church.

Praise, music and Bible study enriched the spirits of all who attended, and practical workshops provided much needed tools for the work of evangelism. Jack Simmons of First United Church in Nashville said, "I lost my fear of the word 'evangelism' and gained an understanding of my own role in telling the story."

Velora J. Ford of Montgomery, Alabama was impressed with the innovative ideas that were shared. Significant ideas with regards to worship were obtained and several have been used since returning from the Institute.

Bill Chew of Huntsville, Alabama came out of the Institute ready for action. He explained, "I strongly supported . . . an attempt to find an acceptable synonym for evangelism because the word was disturbing to me. Now I know the only proper synonym for our calling is evangelism! I discovered that evangelism was not proselyting but simply sharing the joys of your faith with others. I found to my surprise I am already an evangelist for I had done that many times! Now I will do it all the time!"

So say all who attended that first and historic Evangelism Institute.

Let's try to have every church in the Southeast Conference have a team at

Evangelism Institute II

April 4 - 6, 1991 — Atlanta

Evangelism Institute III

April 2 - 4, 1992

The Planning Committee is Bob Kurtz, Nashville; Velora Ford, Montgomery; Bill Chew, Huntsville; Jim Fields, Charleston; Ruth Crook, LaFayette; Rick Parsons, Murfreesboro.

LEADERSHIP

Mitch Johnson — Interim to Button-Gwinnett
Larry Quattlebaum — Interim/Student to Bonifay New Effort
Robert Sherard — Interim to Savannah 1st
Roy Bain — Pastor - Lanett
Atlanta, Central — Association pastors, Joe and Terri Hoffman
Belvidere First — Michael Small, (Sheila Hunter) pastor
Barnesville, Fredonia — Dennis Leeds, pastor
Crossville, United — June Haislip-Hughes,
(Byron Hughes) pastor
Cullman, St. John's — Steve Nyquist, Associate
Fairfield - Glad, Union
Lanette — Pastor Roy Bain
Marietta, Pilgrimage — Michael Shirley (Sue), pastor
Midway — Robert Cox, pastor
Savannah, First — Interim, Robert Sherard
Thomasville, Bethany — Everett Hobson, pastor (Barbara)
Waverly — Jim Birkhead, pastor
Chattanooga First — Christian Education Person

RED THREAD RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ voted to support the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women and,

WHEREAS, the General Synod called upon all settings of the church — local churches, conferences, national instrumentalities, and other bodies, seminaries, and institutions to accept the goals of the Decade, develop strategies to meet the goals . . . and,

WHEREAS, the Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society joins in with the Ecumenical Decade "A Red Thread" project developed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America women to highlight the blood of women — raped, beaten, sexually abused, molested as children, run dry from starvation, victims of war, imprisoned . . . and,

WHEREAS, the Coordinating Center for Women is committed to telling the story and concurrently to do something to help end the bloodshed of women;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society recommends that all conferences, local churches, women's structures and members of the United Church of Christ, introduce the Red Thread project in local churches and communities during October, 1990 which is national Domestic Violence Awareness month. Members of the United Church of Christ are encouraged to wear a red thread around their wrists to symbolize their commitment to ending domestic and sexual violence against women.

Uplands Retirement Village Board Approves \$2.3 Million Budget

At the Annual Meeting of the Uplands Retirement Village in May, the Board approved for the first time in its history, a \$2.3 million budget. The Uplands Retirement Village is made up of three major entities: the Retirement Village; Elizabeth Fletcher House - assisted living; and the May Cravath Wharton Nursing Home. Members of the Board were presented the budget by Chairman of the Finance committee, Mr. Harold Haler of Fairfield Glade, and by Mr. John Buck, Executive Director of Uplands.

Mr. Buck said he believed that Uplands has come a long way since its modest beginning in 1921, and that he sees a continued growth in the need for the services Uplands Retirement Village offers.

Services offered: Home Health Care on call as needed; Maintenance on call as needed for homeowners, renters, etc.; van transportation to Crossville; ability to transfer to different home as needed as needs for assistance change; on-call Security; Beautician; volunteering opportunities to help and assist others in a Christian manner.

SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE
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